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SIPDIS

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TAGS: ETRD BU WTO
SUBJECT: BULGARIA: U.S. MARKET ACCESS PRIORITIES

REF: 04 STATE 270998

¶1. U.S. market access priorities in Bulgaria (ranked with a value from one to five, with one a top priority for U.S. service suppliers in host country and five a very low priority for U.S. service suppliers):

- 3-Legal services
- 3-Accounting, auditing and bookkeeping services
- 3-Taxation services
- 2-Architectural services
- 1-Engineering and integrated engineering services
- 2-Urban planning and landscape architectural services
- 1-Computer and related services
- 3-Research and development services
- 2-Real estate services
- 2-Rental/Leasing Services
- 3-Advertising services
- 3-Market research and public opinion, polling services
- 2-Management consulting services
- 3-Technical testing and analysis services (including energy related testing services)
- 2-Services incidental to agriculture, hunting and forestry, and fishing
- 3-Services incidental to mining
- 1-Energy services (including land site preparation, drilling and plugging)
- 1-Services incidental to energy distribution
- 2-Placement and supply services of personnel
- 2-Investigation and security
- 1-Related scientific and technical consulting services
- 2-Maintenance and repair of equipment
- 3-Building-cleaning services
- 3-Photographic services
- 3-Packaging services
- 4-Printing, publishing
- 2-Convention services
- 3-Courier services (Express Delivery)
- 2-Telecommunication services
- 2-Audiovisual services
- 3-Construction and related engineering
- 3-Distribution Services, including: commission agents' services, wholesale trade services, retailing services, and franchising
- 4-Educational Services, including: higher education services, adult education (i.e., vocational), other education services (i.e., testing and computer or language training)
- 1-Environmental services (wastewater treatment, sanitation, protection of ambient air and climate, remediation and clean up, noise and vibration abatement, and biodiversity protection)
- 4-Insurance services
- 2-Banking and other financial services including securities
- 3-Tourism and travel-related services, including: hotels and restaurants, catering, travel agencies and tour operators services, and tourist guides services
- 3-Recreations and sporting services (other than audiovisual services), including: entertainment services (including theatre, live bands and circus services), news agency services; libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services; sporting and other recreational services.

¶2. Bulgaria's current level of market openness (ranking - high (H), medium (M), or low(L)):

- H-Legal services
- M-Accounting, auditing and bookkeeping services
- M-Taxation services
- M-Architectural services
- H-Engineering and integrated engineering services
- L-Urban planning and landscape architectural services
- H-Computer and related services
- M-Research and development services
- M-Real estate services
- M-Rental/Leasing Services
- L-Advertising services
- M-Market research and public opinion, polling services

-M-Management consulting services
-M-Technical testing and analysis services (including energy related testing services)
-L-Services incidental to agriculture, hunting and forestry, and fishing
-M-Services incidental to mining
-H-Energy services (including land site preparation, drilling and plugging)
-H-Services incidental to energy distribution
-M-Placement and supply services of personnel
-L-Investigation and security
-L-Related scientific and technical consulting services
-L-Maintenance and repair of equipment
-L-Building-cleaning services
-M-Photographic services
-M-Packaging services
-M-Printing, publishing
-H-Convention services
-M-Courier services (Express Delivery)
-H-Telecommunication services
-M-Audiovisual services
-H-Construction and related engineering
-M-Distribution Services, including: commission agents' services, wholesale trade services, retailing services, and franchising
-M-Educational Services, including: higher education services, adult education (i.e., vocational), other education services (i.e., testing and computer or language training)
-H-Environmental services (wastewater treatment, sanitation, protection of ambient air and climate, remediation and clean up, noise and vibration abatement, and biodiversity protection)
-M-Insurance services
-H-Banking and other financial services including securities
-M-Tourism and travel-related services, including: hotels and restaurants, catering, travel agencies and tour operators services, and tourist guides services
-M-Recreations and sporting services (other than audiovisual services), including: entertainment services (including theatre, live bands and circus services), news agency services; libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services; sporting and other recreational services.

13. Pension reforms adopted in 1999-2000 started movement to a "three-pillar pension scheme." The reform of the pay-as-you-go pension system into a diversified three-pillar system aims to gradually shift up to five percent of contributions to a mandatory second pillar to be invested in private pension funds. Each of the eight private pension companies may administer four pension funds at most: a universal pension fund, occupational pension fund, voluntary pension fund and pension fund with investment vouchers. Although the legislative framework has been in place since 1999, a number of challenges remain. In the short run, issues connected to pension indexing, disability claims, effectiveness and reconciliation of contributions, accounting and valuation procedures, and building a strong supervisory agency need to be resolved.